

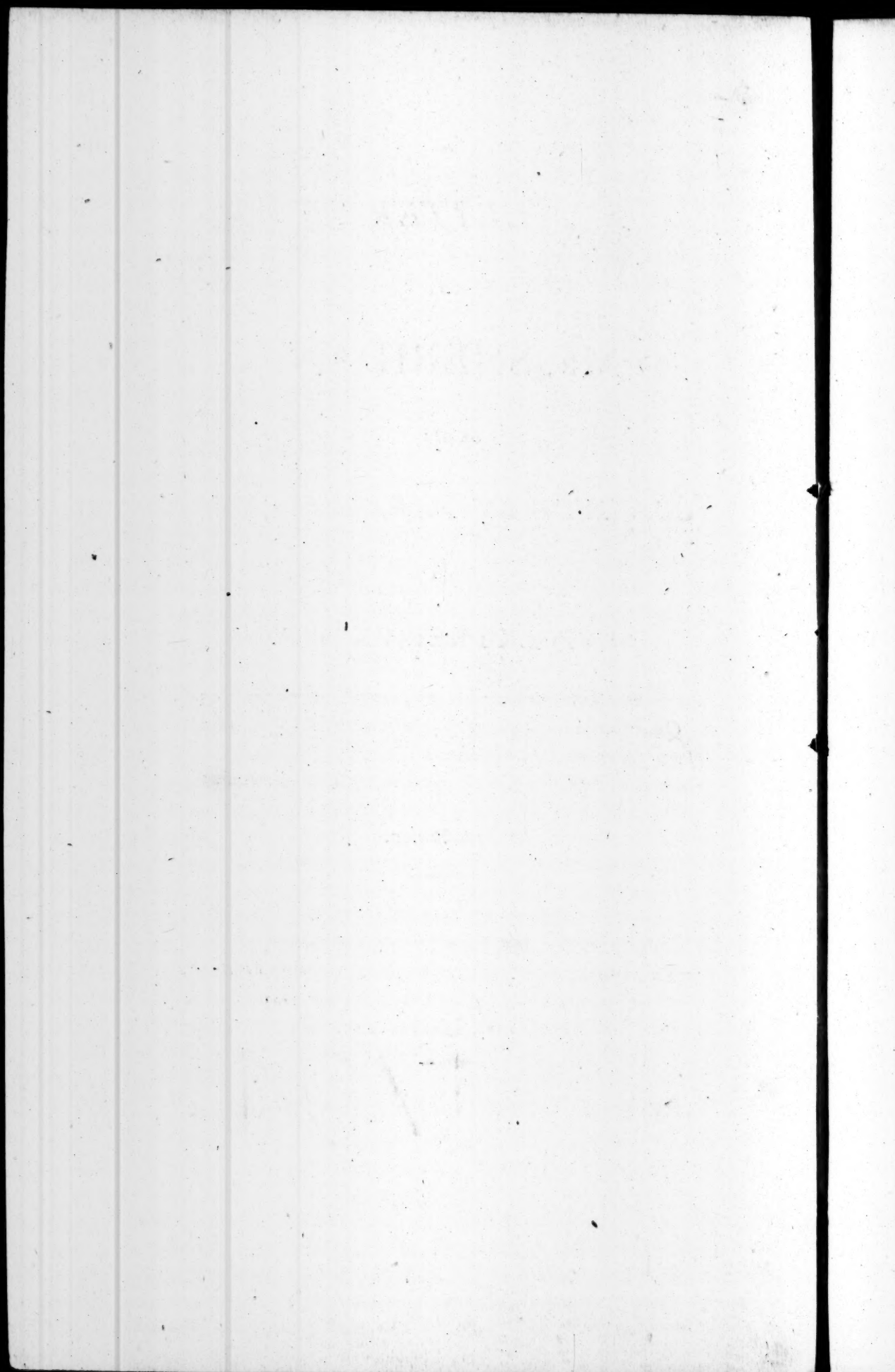
A
LETTER
TO
MR. SHERIDAN,
ON HIS
CONDUCT IN PARLIAMENT,
BY A
SUFFOLK FREEHOLDER.

*Quousque tandem abutere patientia nostra? Quamdiu
etiam furor iste tuus nos eludet?*

Second Edition.

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TO THE

MONTHLY REVIEWERS.

*Nibil est audacius istis
deprensis.*

IN March last, the Monthly Reviewers, when they passed sentence upon my "Observations on the Conduct of Mr. Fox," brought a direct charge against me of having grossly misrepresented the speech which he made upon his motion for sending an ambassador to France; and, after furnishing him with a speech of their own, gallantly appealed to all the publications of the day for a full confirmation of their statement, and a total contradiction of mine. I pointed
out

out to them the Senator as my authority, and demanded an apology. They refused to examine the Senator, or to make an apology; and, instead of overwhelming me with all the other publications of the day, prudently appealed to the ready and convenient ears of one of their accomplices, who undertook to remember the speech fifteen months after it was spoken. This did not satisfy me, and I persisted in my demand. They then proposed to apply to Mr. Fox, and to beg his recollection of the speech delivered by him half a year before. Both these references I declined: the first I think perfectly unsafe, and the other not so much to be depended upon, as accounts taken from the mouth of the speaker in writing, and immediately given to the public in works by no means unfavourable to Mr. Fox.

To these alone the Monthly Reviewers, at first, chose to appeal, but have since abandoned their choice, and attempted to substantiate

substantiate the charge against me, by the most suspicious testimony, the hearsay evidence of an accomplice, without producing a single printed document to support it.

My statement of Mr. Fox's speech is taken from the Senator; Debrett's Parliamentary Register confirms it, and cuts up, by the roots, the accounts which the hearer for the Monthly Review thinks proper to give of it.* Debrett states, that *Mr. Fox declared he should only say a very few words in the way of previous explanation; indeed, from the indisposition he laboured under, a severe hoarseness, it was physically impossible for him to speak above a few minutes.*

But the question between the Monthly Reviewers and me, is not, whether Mr. Fox made the speech as I have stated it; but whether my statement is to be found in

* See the second number of Debrett, and the Senator for December, 1792.

any of the publications of the day. I have shewn them where it is to be found, and in vain demanded an apology for a charge palpably untrue. I now leave it to the public to determine what degree of credit is to be given to the veracity, the candour, and consistency of these reviewers; who first advance a false accusation, and when convicted of it by the authority to which they appealed, will neither retract nor apologize, but basely run away from their own reference, and sheltering themselves under the friendly wing of their hearer, add, without a blush, the meanness of shuffling to the impudence of falsehood.



TO

MR. SHERIDAN.

SIR,

TO institute societies in various parts of the kingdom, for the purposes of spreading discontent and fomenting sedition; to form a national convention of delegates from these societies on French principles; to make a common cause with the people of that nation; and, finally, to subvert the constitution by force of arms, was the plan and design of those active citizens who are at present on their voyage to Botany Bay, or suffering all the horrors of imprisonment in the dreary dungeons of Newgate and the Tower. To give every kind of support to these voyagers, after their

B conviction;

conviction; to deter the judges who sentenced them from doing their duty on similar occasions, by the grossest calumnies; and to deal out encouragement to untried traitors, by boldly denying the existence of seditious and treasonable practices, has been invariably your conduct, Mr. Sheridan, in the last session of Parliament. Nor have your unfortunate countrymen been the only objects of your virtuous exertions; your generous care has been extended to the great and gallant nation with which we are engaged in war, and all the powers of your mind have been employed to counteract the energy of public spirit in individuals, and to obstruct every measure of government.

Yet, Sir, great as I allow your merit to be in this respect, there are others who share it with you; and the little heterogeneous band of opposition in both houses have a claim, though not to an equal portion, at least to a part, from the occasional assistance

assistance which they have afforded to your uniform exertions. I call it a little heterogeneous band from the miserable paucity of its numbers, and the discordant materials of which it is composed.

In the House of Peers there are, I believe, twelve in opposition, and these are split into four, or at least, three parties. An Earl, professing himself a real sans culotte, sunk in the dregs of republicanism, and breathing nothing but mischief and madness, makes the whole of the Stanhope party. Whether the Duke of Grafton and the Marquis of Lansdowne are separate; or whether the querulous imbecility of the one be supported by the tortuous ambiguity of the other, is a point which I am not curious to inquire, nor solicitous to determine. The other nine, from Lord Guildford down to Lord Lauderdale, are the friends of Mr. Fox, and form a poor epitome of his former greatness.

In

In this motley group, and voting constantly with the admirer of Condorcet and the friend of Brissot, I see, with equal surprise and concern, the Earl of Guildford. Not content with adhering to Mr. Fox, whose enmity and friendship were alike fatal to his father, he acts in concert with his basest and bitterest reviler; with a man who, because he is a hypocrite, fancies himself a politician; who, with talents barely sufficient for a little clerk in office, affected to despise the abilities of a North; and, without a single virtue to redeem his own character from infamy, dared to defame his unsullied integrity.

This would-be statesman has, however, been long consigned to oblivion and contempt, and lives with scarce a partizan and without a friend; Lord North, on the contrary, died respected and lamented: and I believe it will be difficult to find in the English annals a minister more zealously attached

attached to the interests of his country, more anxious to promote them, more loyal to his sovereign, or more desirous of preserving the constitution whole and intire. Happy should I be to see the son emulate the example of his illustrious father, and relinquish a party which the Duke of Portland has abandoned, which the Marquis of Lansdowne has joined, and of which you, Mr. Sheridan, are only not the leader.

This is a tribute which I chearfully pay to the memory of a man for whom I always entertained a sincere respect, and whom I was happy to see distinguished with the highest honour that the university, of which I was a member, is enabled to confer. You will pardon me, I am sure, this digression, because you are too noble minded to envy another the possession of virtues which are of no value in your estimation, and form no part of the articles of your political creed. You have no narrow attachment to
your

your country, no unnecessary loyalty to your sovereign, no weak anxiety for a constitution which you frequently declare is not worth preserving. But you possess a magnanimity which despises the opinion of the public; Mr. Fox good naturedly vindicates your veracity, you gallantly assert your own candour, the French applaud your unbought defence of all their proceedings, and the English give you credit for a patriotism, that embraces the interests of every kingdom but England and the allies of England.

But to return from a part to the whole, from you to your party in the House of Commons. Here, as in the Upper House, the sans culotte Peer has not one supporter; the Duke of Grafton's two sons and his Member for Thetford, uniformly vote against him, whilst Mr. Burch, who was elected for Thetford on Lord Petre's interest, constantly lends the whole weight of his eloquence and
abilities

abilities to His Grace. The Marquis of Lansdowne reckons four, amongst whom are his amiable son and his jester. The remainder are Mr. Fox's adherents, and, exclusive of a few country gentlemen, consist of the partners of his faro bank; of the nominees and younger brothers of peers, all enemies, from their situation, to the present unequal representation, and no doubt sincere friends to a reform; of some disappointed luminaries of the law; two or three chiefs out of war; and as many statesmen out of place; in which latter unfortunate class you, Mr. Sheridan, are, I presume to be placed. The whole number once, and only once, amounted to sixty-one; but upon the motions, which you brought forward, seldom, if ever, exceeded forty: so completely do you possess the confidence of your party.

On the 21st of January, when Parliament met, and the address had been moved and seconded, you lost no time in giving your
sentiments

sentiments upon the origin and conduct of the war: you solemnly declared, that you never knew the real grounds of the war, but were convinced that the means, by which we were brought into it, were repeated declamations against the proceedings of the French, made for the purpose of seconding the views of those who were determined to plunge us into it at all events; that the war, on our part, was a war of choice, not of necessity; that we had hunted the French like monsters, baited them like wild beasts, and occasioned all the enormities committed in France. You asserted that the French were always averse from the war, and continued so at this moment; that they had lately demolished the party who seemed in the least to favour it; that their government was perfectly established, and ready to make peace upon terms not merely safe, but advantageous and honourable to this country: yet, so devoted were the people
to

to the cause of liberty, that they agreed to a man to surrender almost all their fortunes; and, from him who possessed ten thousand a year to him who was only worth four hundred, consented to live on one hundred and eighty, and chearfully gave the remainder to the service of the state. Whilst this unbounded liberality was displayed in France, what, you asked, has been given to the public exigencies in England? A few night-caps, mittens, and under-waist-coats.

To demonstrate the necessity of peace, you condemned the whole conduct of the war; nothing great or splendid had been attempted, incapacity was manifest in every plan, blunder marked the execution, disaster the event; the American shores had been completely exposed, our trade had been every where left to fortune, our cruisers were no where to be seen, and six French frigates were masters of the Channel; Lord Hood

Hood had done nothing at Toulon, and the expedition of Sir Charles Grey and Jervis was ruined by protraction and delay.

In combating your account of the origin of the war, I shall have recourse to the authority of Brissot; and Lord Lauderdale will allow, that better and more authentic evidence is not to be procured. The delicacy of His Lordship in the choice of his connections, is at least as much known as it is admired; he is your friend, and was the friend of Brissot; and it is doubtful from which attachment he derives the greatest honour.

Brissot, in his last address to his constituents, says, that *in October, 1792, war was foreseen with the maritime powers, that naval preparations were then begun in France, and that Robespierre and the anarchists were the authors of the war.* Robespierre and Chaumette deny the charge, and retort it upon Brissot and his party. You cannot be ignorant that Brissot, speaking of his opponents,

nents, says, * *Who has been the author of this war? The anarchists only, and yet they make it a crime in us.* You must know, Mr. Sheridan, that in the act of accusation against Brissot and his associates, one principal charge is, *the proposal from the Diplomatic Committee, by the organ of Brissot, to declare war abruptly against England, war against Holland, war against all the powers which had not yet declared themselves.* During the trial of Brissot, Chaumette said in the Jacobin Club, *every patriot has a right to accuse, in this place, the man who voted the war; and the blood which has been shed in the republic, and without the republic, in consequence of it, shall be their proofs and their reasons.* Robespierre, in his report on the 17th of November, 1793, says, *with what base hypocrisy the traitors insisted on certain pretended insults said to have been offered to our ambassador.*

* For these proofs, see Brissot's Address and Lord Mornington's Speech.

Although

Although these are ascertained truths, and you cannot but be acquainted with them, you persist in asserting, that the war was provoked by our government, even after the contending factions in France charge it upon each other, and fully exonerate our ministers from the groundless imputation. The rulers of the day in France, of whatever description they were, have never countenanced you in this respect, nor deigned to adopt your idea, though you have repeatedly pressed it upon their acceptance: they knew the delusion was too palpable, too gross, to pass with the people of France; and yet you continue to play it off upon the senate and people of England.

Your ingenious and fanciful story of hunting and baiting the French, is best answered by Lord Grenville's note to Chauvelin, which states the terms on which peace might be preserved. The terms were, that France should renounce her
views

views of aggression and aggrandizement, and confine herself within her own territory, without insulting other governments, without disturbing their tranquility, without violating their rights.

But although these unreasonable proposals, and this insulting language, forced the French into a war, yet their permanent government is willing to grant us an advantageous and honourable peace. Nothing stands in the way of this desirable object, but two or three trifling obstacles, with which you, Mr. Sheridan, are certainly unacquainted; the first is, a decree passed in April, 1793, which makes it death for a citizen who should propose to treat with any power that shall not previously have acknowledged the independence of the French nation, and the unity and indivisibility of the republic, founded upon liberty and equality. The second is an article of the constitution, of the 10th of August,

August, 1793, which positively declares, that France will not conclude peace with an enemy who occupies any part of her territory. The third is a resolution of the Convention, not to conclude a peace with the people of England, till they have detached themselves from their infernal government. We have, therefore, only to subvert the constitution, to guarantee the possession of Savoy to France, as a part of the unity and indivisibility of the republic, and to give up our conquests in the East and West Indies, before we can be admitted to treat with a government which has been changed only twice, (I mean in its leaders) since you affirmed it to be firmly fixed and perfectly settled.

You blazoned, with all the splendour of your eloquence, the enthusiasm of the people of France, in voluntarily sacrificing almost the whole of their property to carry on the war. Fact, Mr. Sheridan, is always the mortal

mortal enemy of your declamation. It appears that this voluntary sacrifice arises from a *forced loan, the rate of which is as follows: of all yearly income not exceeding forty pounds, one-tenth is taken; the tax then increases progressively one tenth upon each forty pounds, until where the income reaches four hundred, two hundred and twenty pounds are absorbed by the tax, and all income above four hundred pounds is to be taken absolutely and intirely.

On the conduct of the war, I must again introduce Brissot: his testimony contradicts you a second time, and does that justice to the courage and exertions of your countrymen which you constantly refuse. Brissot declares, that *though England did not begin to arm till three months after France, in March, 1793, all the French privateers were destroyed in the Channel; in April their trading vessels were taken by*

* See Lord Mornington's Speech.

English

English frigates, in the very mouths of their rivers; and Admiral Gardner was sent with seven ships of the line and a number of frigates to the West Indies, and made himself master of the richest ships of their colonies.

It is not necessary to make a formal defence of Lord Hood; you have at present only calumniated him, and menaced him with an inquiry which you dare not prosecute. The nation knows that his conduct at Toulon was great and masterly, that an important and decisive blow was given there to the French marine, and that if any part escaped destruction, the failure originated in a different quarter.

Admiral Gardner, no mean naval authority, says, that if the Channel were covered with cruisers, the French, from being in possession of Cherbourg, could annoy it with their frigates, which can get under weigh in the night and return by the next morning.

This

This advantage must sometimes be detrimental to the best protected trade; but to ours, left as it is intirely to fortune, must be destructive.

Why, Mr. Sheridan, when you entertain the House with the dictates of your fancy, will you forget the precept you read at school,

Ficta voluptatis causâ sint proxima veris?

It was proved, by authentic documents and official papers, that seventy convoys were appointed to guard our commerce in the first year of the war, though at the commencement of it only thirteen thousand seamen were in employment.

What losses we have sustained in America, the public are yet to learn, for your various and well-informed correspondents state only the neglect and dangers of that coast.

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With

With the ruin of Grey's and Jervis's expedition, every one is acquainted; delayed and procrastinated as it was, it ended in the capture of Guadalupe, Martinique, and the other French West India islands, after you had assumed the tone and character of a prophet, and foretold the total miscarriage of so ill digested a plan.

Surely, Sir, this was a day of singularly good fortune to your reputation; your predictions were answered by every thing but the desired events, your assertions wanted nothing but proofs, your statements nothing but facts.

On the 27th of January, you excited the curiosity of the House and the public, by mentioning a discovery you had made of great and enormous expences incurred in a variety of new offices, or jobs, with unheard-of salaries, which the minister had created for the purposes of corruption; and gave notice,

notice, that on the next day you should move for the papers necessary to substantiate your suspicions. In a speech which did equal honour to your abilities and humanity, you informed the ignorant part of the House, that it was their first duty to watch the public purse, and to take care that not a sixpence was mispent, least the distressed labourer and starving mechanic should lose a morsel of their miserable meal, by the profusion of a prodigal minister.

How attentive, Sir, you are to the poor and industrious! how tremblingly alive to wants which you never occasioned, and to distresses which you never increased!

After this gratuitous display of feeling, you gave such a definition of a job, as shewed that you clearly understood the nature and meaning of the thing in all its bearings; and then moved for an account of the expences attending the mission of
the

the Earl of Yarmouth to the King of Prussia; an account of the pensions, or half-pay, to the Commissioners at Toulon and in Lord Moira's army; an account of the salary enjoyed by Mr. Anstruther, as Counsel to the Board of Controul; an account of the salary to Sir Gilbert Elliott, as Commissioner at Toulon; and an account of the salaries to Lord Hood and General O'Hara, for the same service. All that you asked was granted, and the formidable inquiry began.

It appeared that the Earl of Yarmouth received nothing for his mission to the King of Prussia, but his travelling expences. With this circumstance you said you were acquainted, but you included the job in your motions from that candour which never suffered you to point out what was bad, without specifying at the same time all that was meritorious on the part of administration.

Mr.

Mr. Pitt, with much ingratitude and unpoliteness, said, he did not think that any member in the House would give credit to this declaration; and Mr. Fox, with great good sense and friendship, replied, that he was convinced every one believed you as implicitly as he did.

Leaving this point in the hands of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, who know more of your veracity and candour than I do, I shall venture to say, that you made a general charge against the appointments as useless, unnecessary, and expensive; and, as you did not except the Earl of Yarmouth's, it is fairly to be presumed that you put it upon the same footing with the rest. Besides, if there be no instance of your allowing merit to administration in any other case whatever (and not the shadow of one is to be found in the whole of your parliamentary warfare), what inducement could you have to vary from your constant custom, and to deviate

deviate into candour upon this particular occasion? Neither I nor the public can guess the reason of this singularity in your conduct.

If, however, you meant to except the Earl of Yarmouth's mission, you condemned, without hesitation or reserve, all the other employments. You described them as jobs that squeezed from the pockets of an impoverished people, from the toils, the labours, and the sweat of their brows, money to be squandered as the price of political apostacy. Such was your language, and its beauty is equal to its justice.

The unprecedented pension, or half-pay, to the commissaries was shewn to be strictly consonant to the usual practice in this and all former wars. Mr. Anstruther did not receive any salary as Counsel to the Board of Controul. The appointment of Sir Gilbert Elliott, as First Commissioner at Toulon, amounted to the enormous sum of
fifteen

fifteen hundred pounds a year. Lord Hood and General O'Hara, the two other Commissioners, for their services had—nothing.

These were the infamous jobs with excessive salaries; this the wasteful expenditure of the public money.

Any man out of opposition, indeed I believe any man but one in opposition, would have been embarrassed by such a discovery; would, perhaps, have apologized to the House for bringing a charge completely unfounded; or, at least, have been glad to conceal his disgrace in silence. You, Sir, had more spirit, you adopted the manner and language of Sempronius, a Roman patriot;

Your cold hypocrisy's a stale device,
A worn-out trick; would'st thou be thought in earnest
Clothe thy feign'd zeal in rage, in fire, in fury!

Addison's Cato.

You did so, you loudly vindicated your injured fame, and dared to mortal combat
the

the man who should even look a doubt of your candour and veracity.

This lively indignation had a proper effect upon the nerves of your hearers, and convinced them that you, from conscious integrity no doubt, were superior to all sense of shame, and had courage to fight your way through a charge which you had not proofs to support.

The public heard the result of this inquiry with a mixture of astonishment, disgust, and pleasure: with astonishment, that one of their representatives should bring so serious an accusation without the shadow of a foundation; with disgust, that he should offer so egregious an insult to their understandings; and with pleasure, that in wantonly attacking the reputation of another, he had justly forfeited his own.

I will do you the justice to believe, Sir, that, when you embarked in this business, you expected it would terminate in a very
different

different manner. You had received, from one of your many pure sources of information, an underling, perhaps, in office, intelligence to the prejudice of the Minister and several of your old friends; and your virtuous hatred of both would not suffer you to examine into the truth or probability of it; you forgot your usual prudence and cunning, and consulted nothing but the dangerous dictates of resentment. You pleased yourself with the glorious idea of exposing the rapacity of friends, whom you once loved with the tenderest fondness, and the prodigality of the Minister, whom you always detested with the sincerest cordiality. To succeed in either object must have been delightful; but success in both would not have left a single wish of your generous and feeling mind ungratified. Unfortunately you failed, and the disgrace which you hoped to heap upon

upon your friends and enemy, fell in full weight and measure on your own head.

Your next laudable attempt was to criminate ministry for the neglect of Halifax, and the charge was supported by evidence that carries conviction upon the face of it, by letters either anonymous or signed with names of which the proprietors could not be found. To one of these, who chose to be a Mr. Bluett, of Falmouth, you wrote in terms of gratitude and respect; thanked him for his past favours, begged the honour of his future, and promised to use whatever intelligence he sent you, for the good of the country. When your letter reached Falmouth, no Mr Bluett could be discovered, and all this kindness and attention were lavished upon a poor lying vagabond, who has nothing to comfort him for the sad wants of a house and a character, except your warm professions of confidence and esteem.

But

But though Mr. Bluett was a little inaccurate in the account of his residence, you gave implicit belief to his information relative to Halifax; and on the 21st of February moved for a memorial presented, on the very day of the debate, by the merchants of London trading to Nova Scotia. From your knowledge of the contents, and of the exact time when this memorial was presented, you were shrewdly suspected to have furnished the one, and procured the other, to come in aid of Mr. Bluett's intelligence. Be this as it may, you could not expect to succeed in your motion, for you knew that Mr. Dundas had not received the memorial till three o'clock in the afternoon, and had had no time to consider it or consult with the other ministers upon the subject: you knew, also, that it was contrary to the forms and practice of the House to consent to the production of it under such circumstances.

You

You have long been in the habit, Sir, of asking for papers that ought not to be granted; but this asking for such as could not is quite a novel improvement. The House refused to adopt it, and paid the same attention to your memorial and to Mr. Bluett's information; they had no curiosity to see the former, nor credulity enough to believe the latter.

Ministry opposed to both, the letters of General Ogilvie, Governor Wentworth, Major Hodgson, and Commodore George; and these stated, that *Hallifax, from its low peace-establishment, was not at the beginning of the war in a good state of defence; that every effort had been made to strengthen it, and this was done with so much effect, that the commanders by sea and land rather wished than dreaded the attack which the French threatened, but had not the courage to make.* These letters were laid before the House upon your motion, but you declined proceeding

ceeding upon them; the inquiry, as usual, ended in smoke, and more to the credit of the accused than the accuser.

But though you could not land the French at Halifax, you made good their landing in Northumberland, where they committed enormous devastations, carried off the stock and cattle from two considerable estates, menaced the town, and alarmed even the Mayor of Newcastle. These afflictive tidings you, on the 24th of March, detailed to the House, with much compassion for the unhappy sufferers, and many just complaints of the shameful neglect of ministry, and their total inattention to the safety of the northern coast, upon which there was not one ship for its protection.

I have never been able to learn through what channel this information came, but I rather apprehend that Mr. Bluett, after leaving Falmouth, is retired into the north,
and

and continues to supply you with useful intelligence.

Mr. Grey corroborated the whole of this statement, and there was not a single word of truth in it from beginning to end. No depredations had been committed, no sheep nor oxen put to the sword, and neither pigs nor poultry taken away; the town of Newcastle was in perfect safety, and the Mayor quite at his ease; the French had not attempted to make a descent, and the trade of the north was completely secured by four ships of great force, stationed along the coast.

The limits I have prescribed to myself will not suffer me to consider the whole of your conduct, with the attention it so richly deserves; but I will endeavour to shew, that you have the same claim to consistency as to accuracy of information and fidelity of statement.

On

On the 12th of January, 1784, Mr. Pitt presented a message from the King, relative to the Hessians in our service returning from America, who could not be sent home on account of the rivers being frozen, and were therefore obliged to be landed and quartered in England; he then moved an address of thanks to the King, for his gracious communication, and it was voted unanimously. On the 27th of January, 1794, Mr. Dundas brought up a message from His Majesty, informing the House that a corps of Hessian troops, destined for foreign service, having been brought to the coast off the Isle of Wight, His Majesty, to prevent the sickness of these men on board the transports, had given orders that they should be quartered in the Isle of Wight and its vicinage; he afterwards moved an address to His Majesty, thanking him for his gracious communication, and it passed unanimously.

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It is difficult to shew the least difference in these two cases, and the circumstances that occasioned the landing were precisely the same; the convenience of the troops, and the hazard, if not impossibility, of conveying them immediately to the place of their destination.

In 1784, the opposition were stronger than ministry, and truly respectable in abilities, integrity, and attachment to the constitution. That opposition did not think a bill of indemnity necessary on the former occasion. In 1794, opposition are formidable indeed for misapplied talents, but have lost, at least, two-thirds of their former friends, and with them the confidence of the public. This opposition, though satisfied without a bill of indemnity in 1784, were now clamorous for one, in an instance exactly similar, and have put themselves under the tuition of Mr. Grey to be taught the elements of the British Constitution.

I cannot

I cannot help thinking that a bill of indemnity was necessary in both cases, or in neither; and if you, Sir, are of opinion, as I presume you are, by the votes you have lately given, that such a bill ought to have passed upon Mr. Grey's motions, you acknowledge yourself guilty of having formerly consented to a dangerous infringement of the constitution, and scandalously neglected your duty to your country.

On the 7th of May, 1782, Lord Shelburne, then Secretary of State, wrote a circular letter to the mayors and chief magistrates of corporations, enclosing the heads of a plan for raising and maintaining troops in the principal towns, at the expence of those towns, and submitted neither the plan nor the letter to Parliament, till the 11th of June.

On the 14th of March, 1794, Mr. Dundas wrote a letter to the lord lieutenants of counties, desiring their sentiments on a
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plan

plan for raising troops for the defence of the country, and wishing them to recommend voluntary subscriptions for assisting the levies, when sanctioned by Parliament.

Copies of this letter, and other papers, were laid before both Houses, and a bill was brought in upon them before the 27th of March.

These applications appear to be of the same nature; there was no previous communication to Parliament in either, and in both an appeal was made to the loyalty and liberality of the people. You, however, who concurred in the safety and legality of the former, reprobated the latter with more than your usual asperity, and, on the 28th of March, moved the following resolution :
 “ That it is a dangerous and unconstitutional measure for the people of this country, to make any loan, subscription, or benevolence to the Crown, to be used for any
 public

public purpose, without the previous consent of Parliament."

Had this resolution been carried, you would have shared, with Lord Shelburne, the guilt of duping the people of England into dangerous and unconstitutional practices; but, as it failed, we have only another proof of your inconsistency, and the convenient changeableness of your principles.

If there be any meaning affixed to words, Lord Shelburne's letter solicited subscriptions; not indeed by name, but in fact: it required that the great towns should *furnish* one or two battalions each, and maintain them till they quitted their homes; it then stated clearly what part of the expence government meant to defray; and hinted that arms, accoutrements, and ammunition, would not be supplied, *unless required*.

But

But how did the magistrates and towns to whom Lord Shelburne wrote understand his letter; and what answers did they return? Leeds, Doncaster, and Sunderland, offered money; Cambridge and Sheffield men; Yorkshire and Sussex raised men; Devonshire and Cornwall actually entered into subscriptions; and a variety of places proposed a variety of plans.

On the legality of voluntary subscriptions, it cannot be thought very hazardous to oppose the solemn opinion of Lord Hardwicke to your fancy of the day. His Lordship, upon the trial of Lord Balmerino, said, *that, in the time of the rebellion, men of all ranks and orders crowded in with liberal subscriptions, of their own motion, beyond the example of former times, and uncompelled by law, and yet in the most legal and warrantable manner, notwithstanding what has been ignorantly and presumptuously suggested to*
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the contrary. Blackstone says, that no subject of England can be constrained to pay any aids or taxes, even for the defence of the realm, or support of government, but such as are imposed by his own consent, or that of his representatives in parliament.

These are the opinions of men of the most acknowledged and most conspicuous legal talents, and of unrepurchased characters; and, upon their authority, I will venture to rest the legality of voluntary subscriptions.

It may not be improper to state the periods when these subscriptions have been raised, and when and by whom they have been opposed. In 1745 they were vilified by the adherents of the Pretender. In 1759, when we were at war with France, the city of London contributed nobly to the exigencies of the state, and France at that time had no friends in England to censure them. In 1778 they were reprobated by the advocates

cates of America. In 1782, when your patch-work ministry solicited them, they were not opposed, because Lord North, in and out of office, was equally attentive to the interests of his country. In 1794 they were condemned as illegal and unconstitutional, by the very men who patronized them in 1782, and who shew themselves, on all occasions, as much the enemies of France as the friends of England.

When it was hinted in the debate that you were copying the patriots of 1745, you exclaimed, with a lively indignation, "Am I supposed to be a favourer of the French?" There was an almost general cry of *bear! bear!* You asked the question again, the cry of *bear! bear!* was more loudly repeated, and you desired any gentleman to stand up and declare his suspicion. Mr. Yorke, the Member for Cambridgeshire, instantly rose, and said, that *if a number of gentlemen wished to shew themselves favourable*

able to the French cause, as those who wished success to the Pretender did in 1745, be thought they would adopt a line of conduct very similar to that which had been shewn by you that day. This manly declaration, with your intire acquiescence, settled the matter to the satisfaction of the House; and in the minds of the public left not a doubt remaining of its propriety and justice.

On the 8th of April, Mr. Harrison moved for leave to bring in a bill for the purpose of appropriating certain portions of sinecure places and pensions to the use of the public during the war, and his motion received your cordial support. Although the ministry, of which you were a distinguished member, had stated to Parliament and the nation, in the King's speech, on the 12th of November, 1783, that *a reduction had been made in all the establishments as low as prudence would admit*; yet you expatiated, much at your ease, and with your usual
merry

merry malignity, upon the infinite number of places and pensions, and the enormous emoluments arising from them, as if the former had never been diminished, and the latter never curtailed.

In this instance you could not plead that Mr. Bluett had imposed upon your credulity, and made you his instrument to deceive the House and the public. But you chose not to know what you did know, and Mr. Rose was obliged to assist your recollection by a statement, which clearly demonstrated how futile the proposition of Mr. Harrison was, and how little could be obtained from his paltry resource for the service of the state.

The savings of the public, by the suppression and regulation of offices since 1782, were thus stated by Mr. Rose:

Savings

Savings in the Civil List.

	Per ann.
	£.
Suppression of offices (216),	- 60,216
Reduction of pensions,	- 37,162

Savings in Public Revenue, in War.

Exchequer offices,	- 26,500
Auditors of the imprest,	- 32,700
Sinecure offices in customs,	- 10,600
Arrangement of excise offices,	- 12,600
	<hr/>
	179,778

These, and immense sums besides these, in loans, contracts, and lotteries, have been saved in the public expenditure; and eighty-six offices in the customs, with salaries to the amount of 38,400l. a year, will be abolished, as they fall in. Yet after the suppression of so many places, and retrenchments so considerable in others, and
after

after the declaration of your ministry in 1783, that they could not admit of a farther reduction, you gravely asserted, that they would furnish ample supplies for carrying on the war.

In 1789, Mr. Sheridan, if I am rightly informed, you had no antipathy to sinecures, no wish to make them an object of revenue. Had the King's illness continued, it was generally understood that the Duke of Portland was to be at the head of a new administration, and absolutely refused to act with you in the cabinet; that a compromise had taken place, and a vice-treasurership of Ireland was to be the reward of your public services. Your disinterestedness, Sir, deserves equal praise with the rest of your political virtues.

If in some instances I have denied the consistency of your conduct, I am ready to do justice to it in the encouragement you have uniformly given, and the protection
you

you have afforded (where you were able), to reformers of all denominations, at home and abroad; from the lowest retailer of sedition, to the full blown traitor.

Of Citizen Fayette's virtues you have always spoke with rapture, of his sufferings with horror; and, much indeed to your credit, joined in an address to His Majesty, requesting his interference with the King of Prussia to release him from his imprisonment.

The general merits of Fayette, and his particular claims to the favour of this country, are well known. He has declared insurrection to be the most sacred of all duties; he was a rebel to his king, and subverted his government; and, before France entered into the war, volunteered his services to America against this kingdom.

In order to prepossess the public in favour of domestic traitors (I mean reformers), and to shew them that they might
depend

depend on support, you asserted in the House, that *there was no traiterous design formed against the constitution, by any individuals or by the political societies, and that all the plots and conspiracies, with which they had been cruelly and unjustly charged, originated solely in the foul imaginations and disordered conceptions of His Majesty's Ministers.* These assertions, I have no doubt, were made for the good of the country, and have produced, in some cases at least, the desired effect. Yet I cannot help thinking, that there is more of energy and boldness than of prudence or accuracy in this language, for the trial and conviction of Watt and Downie shew the treason of individuals, and the papers and letters of the societies prove, if any thing can prove, that, whatever they chose to profess, their real object was to overturn the constituted authorities of the country, to over-awe and take possession of the functions

tions of Parliament, and completely to destroy the constitution in all its branches.

Your benevolence too has been extended beyond the encouragement of untried offenders against the state, and, in the case of Mr. Palmer, was displayed, not in words only but in acts of solid support, after his conviction. For him, you made a rancorous attack on the Lord Advocate of Scotland, aspersed the characters of the Judges, and attempted to stop the course of justice, and to change the whole code of the Scotch criminal law, with which the people of that country were perfectly satisfied, because Mr. Palmer was sentenced to a severe punishment for an atrocious crime. In spite of this unfavourable circumstance, you represented him to the House in the most glowing colours, *as a man animated with the strongest enthusiasm in the cause of liberty, of a mind great and accomplished, and a soul alive to the finest feelings of humanity.*

Young

Young Mr. Whitbread, the classic, added his tribute; boasted of his intimacy with Mr. Palmer, and painted him as a *man of the most engaging manners, of the most enlightened mind; who bore unheeded-of oppression with so much firmness and fortitude, as to bring to his memory what Seneca says of Cato, that there could not be a sight more delectable to the Gods than that of a virtuous man struggling with adversity.*

But what do the public know of this man of many virtues, this reverend reformer? They know that, in the discharge of his clerical duties, he travelled into Scotland for the pious purposes of exciting discontent, disseminating seditious doctrines, and stirring up the people to assist France; that of these trifling offences he was convicted, and sentenced to transportation to Botany Bay for fourteen years. His punishment, certainly not his crime, recommended him to your patronage and protection

tion, and to the attention of many noblemen and rich members of Parliament, who, *Mr. Margarot says, *supported him on board the transport, and privately sent him frequent and valuable presents.* When in the hulk, he was honoured with confidential visits from Lord Lauderdale, Mr. Grey, Mr. Whitbread, and yourself, and his sufferings were softened by the kindness and esteem of his new and illustrious friends. How much he deserved the bounty of the good and great, and how well intitled he was to the splendid suit of virtues in which you so gaily dressed him, his conduct, since he quitted a country not worthy of such a citizen, has clearly demonstrated. As soon as he lost sight of his native shore, our English Cato, the spectacle for the Gods, forgot in a moment all the salutary instructions he had received from you, and

* See Margarot's Letter to the Norwich Societies.

employed

employed the money, so generously given, *non hos quæsitum munus in usus*, in bribing one of the mates to murder the captain of the ship in which he was, and to run her to America. This spirited attempt was unluckily frustrated, and *Cato failed in the glorious design of crowning sedition with murder.

I do not mean, Sir, to deny that you have shewn as much zeal for the success of the war, as anxiety for the safety of the Constitution. The principle of the war you have often reprobated, and as often engaged to support ministry in the vigorous prosecution of it. This promise, repeatedly made, has been religiously observed in an indiscriminate resistance to every measure, even to the ordinary mode of recruiting

* This account is taken from the newspapers, and as Mr. Palmer did not authorise the insertion, the Monthly Reviewers will, probably, deny its authenticity.

the


the army, in a decided oppositon to the plan of subsidising foreign powers, of arming the French emigrants, and raising voluntary corps, by subscription, for the internal defence of the kingdom. To stimulate the ardour of our officers, you have laboured to depreciate the services of Lord Hood, and to withhold from him the well earned tribute of public gratitude, because he has only destroyed the greater part of the French marine at Toulon, and added Corsica to the British empire. Nor have your endeavours been wanting to sow jealousies between us and our allies, to embroil us with the neutral nations, and to irritate America to hostilities against your country.

This conduct, Sir, equally honourable to yourself and beneficial to the state, cannot fail to insure to you the esteem of all our moderate reformers, the thanks of the London and Stockport Corresponding Societies

cieties, and even the applauses of the French Convention. If these are the objects of your ambition, long may you enjoy the opprobrious distinction, and leave to your more fortunate rivals the best and only reward which they wish to obtain,—the hatred of all the enemies of England, and the approbation, confidence, and support, of all her friends.

A SUFFOLK FREEHOLDER.

November 1st, 1794.



TO THE

MONTHLY REVIEWERS.

Detect his fib, his sophistry; in vain;
The creature's at his dirty work again.

THE Monthly Reviewers have at last given a state of the case between us, by which it clearly appears that they had the folly and impudence to bring forward a charge which they could not support by any credible evidence, and the baseness not to retract it after they knew it to be false. They say indeed that they had the kindness to offer me, in lieu of an apology, some good advice, and the sweetener of a soothing compliment, which they conceive to be a handsome proceeding on their part, and all that a man, anxious only to vindicate his character, ought

ought to wish or expect. Of what a man of character ought to require as a satisfaction for an injury, I believe the Monthly Reviewers to be very incompetent judges; I despise alike the impertinence of unasked advice, and the paltry peace offering of flimsy compliment, and continue to demand from them an ample apology, as the only atonement to be received for a false accusation. I am aware it may be urged that, if the Monthly Reviewers were to beg pardon for all their *little inaccuracies*, their learned lucubrations, instead of encouraging every doctrine that leads to anarchy and confusion, and forming, as they do at present, *the Traitor's complete Vade-mecum*, would dwindle into a mere compilation of explanations, compliments, and apologies, to the severe loss of the enlightened part of the public, the friends of French principles and French practices.

The Monthly Reviewers gravely declare that they never knew, till I told them, of
accounts

accounts of speeches being written down in the House of Commons, but admit that notes are sometimes taken to refresh the memory of the reporter. This, to a person who has heard of writing in short hand, appears to be a distinction without a difference, and proves that these acute critics, these solid reasoners, have as great an aversion to a quibble as they have fondness for a matter of fact. But they have introduced this piece of ingenuity for the purpose of telling an anecdote of a reporter, who gave an account of a speech of Lord North, which his Lordship never made, and seem to insinuate that I am acquainted with the circumstance. My answer is, that I never heard of the anecdote, that my memory cannot furnish me with the faintest recollection of it, that I do not understand them, nor have I the wisdom to take a hint from what is to me a perfect mystery. This unfortunate reporter, if he is not a creature of the Monthly Reviewers' fancy,

fancy, may probably be an elder brother of the hearer of the Monthly Review, who remembered every word that Mr. Fox did *not* say, and generously supplied him with an infinite variety of arguments, when he had declared himself incapable of using a single one from a severe hoarseness.

To look for fair dealing from the Monthly Reviewers is, I know, an idle expectation; they have already been convicted by me, at the bar of the public, of shuffling, misrepresentation, and falsehood; and instead of confessing their crimes, instead of the humble language of detected guilt, have the effrontery to adopt the lofty tone of insolence and defiance. Such scolding and vapouring are unreasonable and ridiculous, and, like their professions of candour and impartiality, are constantly in their mouths, but never carried, nor intended to be carried further. It would be doing them injustice to suppose them possessed of courage, when
they

they are wanting in veracity; they are men of words, not of deeds, and talk too much of acting, ever to mean to act at all.

I have only one observation to make upon their account of my letter to Mr Sheridan; in which I spoke of the late Lord Guildford, as a man zealously attached to his country, to his king, and to the constitution: I declared my surprize and concern to see the present Earl acting in concert with the enemies of his father, and expressed an earnest wish that he would adopt a different line of conduct, and emulate the example of his illustrious father. This the Monthly Reviewers term *professing respect and veneration for the memory of the late Lord, and proving the sincerity of my professions by abusing his son and heir*. There cannot, I think, be a more gross perversion of language than in this assertion, and I hesitate not to pronounce it a *direct and shameless falsehood*.

May 2, 1795.

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OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
CONDUCT
OF
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AND HIS OPPOSITION,
IN THE
LAST SESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT.

BY THE
SAME AUTHOR.

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